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The *Great Gatsby* Music Analysis

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Sophomore

Literary Explorations II, Dr. Gleason

The Great Gatsby Music Analysis

Sophomore

The Great Gatsby Music Analysis

With the production of the upcoming film version of *The Great Gatsby*, an appropriate music selection must be made for the movie. The song's placement in the film, such as which scene it will be played in, its lyrics and its overall theme must be analyzed in order to find its suitability for the movie. As music producer, I have chosen the song "I Miss You" by Aaron Hall to be incorporated into *The Great Gatsby* film. This song is appropriate for the film because its lyrics and emotional feel match the novel's themes of the heartbreak of lost love and desperation to restore the past.

"I Miss You" is a suitable song for the film because its lyrics express *The Great Gatsby's* theme of heartbreak caused by lost love. In the novel, Jay Gatsby and Daisy fell in love before Gatsby went off to war. He recounts "I can't describe to you how surprised I was to find out I loved her, old sport. I even hoped for a while that she'd throw me over, but she didn't, because she was in love with me too" (157). However, during the time that Gatsby was away, Daisy fell in love with and married Tom Buchanan. This idea of past love being forgotten also occurs in the song. The first verse reads "We used to talk, and laugh all night girl", which implies that the two people had previously shared a love life. This love is lost in the next few verses, which read "What happened to those days / Did they all just fade away". Also, in the third stanza, the song reads "I thought you'd be with me forever / But I guess someone took my place". These excerpts explain that the love was broken and lost, similarly to Tom stealing Daisy's love from Gatsby. More importantly, both the book and the song share not only the idea of lost love, but also the theme of the emotional grief caused by it. In the novel, Gatsby's sorrow at losing Daisy's love is evident. He stands outside her house for the entire night and refuses to leave the city in hopes of

restoring their love. On page 155, it reads “He couldn’t possibly leave Daisy until he knew what she was going to do. He was clutching at some last hope and I couldn’t bear to shake him free.” The song “I Miss You” shares this theme of sorrow caused by lost love; the second and third stanzas especially portray this idea. The third stanza ends with the lines “Please come back and rescue me / From all this pain and misery”. The song is suitable for *The Great Gatsby* film because it expresses the theme of lost love causing sorrow.

Moreover, “I Miss You” is an appropriate song for the movie because they share the theme of desperation to restore the past. Throughout the latter part of the novel, Gatsby is trying to slide back into the life that he and Daisy were living before the war. His attempt at restoring the past is described on page 117; it reads “He talked a lot about the past and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy.” This theme is illustrated in the song as well, which makes it ideal for the film. In the second stanza, the singer says “But now is the day I wish you could come back to make us true”; this verse shows the singer’s longing to restore the past love that he had. In addition, the extent of desperation the lovers have is shared in both the song and the novel. Gatsby’s determination to return to his past lifestyle is shown when he travels back to Louisville after the war. The book reads “He left feeling that if he had searched harder he might have found her – that he was leaving her behind” (160). Even though Gatsby realizes that Daisy has moved, for she had sent him a letter beforehand, he still feels the need to search for her there. In “I Miss You”, the entire last stanza contains lyrics that represent the tremendous desperation the singer has. In particular, a verse reads “Come back to me, I’m begging you please” that expresses the extent of his desire to restore the past. The “begging” that is mentioned in the song resembles Gatsby’s desperate

action of returning to Louisville. The desperation to return to a past lifestyle within *The Great Gatsby* is reiterated in the song “I Miss You”, which makes it ideal for its inclusion in the film.

In addition to this, the emotional feel of the song makes it suitable for the film version of *The Great Gatsby*. The melody of “I Miss You” is very sorrowful and slow, which corresponds to Gatsby’s grief at losing Daisy. As a result, the speaker of the song represents Gatsby, but only after he discovers that Daisy has left him for Tom. This requires specific scene placement for the song, and as music producer, I have chosen to play the song when Gatsby is standing in the bushes outside of Daisy’s house. My reasoning behind this is that this is the scene when Gatsby realizes that he is losing Daisy’s love and that the past will not be restored; the emotional feeling of sorrow is at its climax in this scene. The song would have to be meta-diegetic and it would fade to a quieter level during the dialogue between Nick and Gatsby. Since the entire song helps develop the emotion and themes of the film, the whole song will be played during this scene. The emotional feel of the song limits its scene placement, but overall it helps make the song appropriate for the film.

The song “I Miss You” shares themes and emotions with *The Great Gatsby*, which makes it suitable for its inclusion in the film version of the book. The themes of lost love causing sorrow and the desperation to return to a past lifestyle are expressed in both the song as well as the novel. Also, *The Great Gatsby* and “I Miss You” both have a sad emotional feel to themselves. As a result, the song “I Miss You” is appropriate for *The Great Gatsby* and should be incorporated into the film version of the novel.